

ABSTRACT

A method for distributing electronic mail efficiently across a network of information processing units and intermediate nodes. The method on an information processing unit includes receiving a mail message created by a user with a list of destinations. Also, the method further includes sending a single copy of the mail message across the network via intermediate nodes to addresses corresponding to the list of destinations using a reliable multicast technique. Also, the invention includes receiving a packet on an intermediate node where the packet contains address information for a list of destinations. Also, the invention includes determining at an intermediate node the "next hop" or "next hops" that the packet should be forwarded to and forwarding a copy of the packet to each of those "next hops".